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#stopbullying

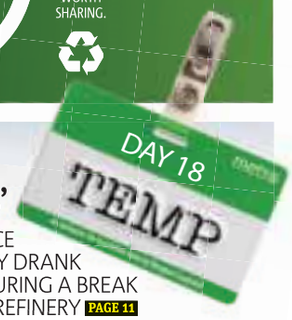
Socially conscious social-media use could stop cyberbullying, high school students at an anti-bullying forum are told PAGE 3

A game of high stakes

Rogers inks a blockbuster 12-year, $5.2-billion deal with the NHL PAGE 10

'I'VE GOT A REAL GROWN-UP-JOB JOB'

SHANNON VISITS HER OLD OFFICE FLIRT, KYLE — WHO APPARENTLY DRANK THE 'NEW KYLE' KOOL-AID — DURING A BREAK FROM HIS NEW JOB AT THE OIL REFINERY PAGE 11



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Party down on the Green Mile

Roughriders mascot Gainer the Gopher gets cheers from fans outside the Saskatchewan Legislative Building after the Grey Cup parade in Regina on Tuesday. Go to page 4 and metronews.ca for a photo gallery from the day and see page 20 for more Roughriders coverage. LIAM RICHARDS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Heroes' reception. Crowd chants 'Let's go Riders,' goes wild for Durant at Grey Cup victory parade

Some children skipped school and adults did the same with work to join the crowd at a Grey Cup parade in Regina on Tuesday.

The parade and rally were held to celebrate the Saskatchewan Roughriders' 45-23 win over the Hamilton Tiger-Cats on Sunday in the CFL's championship game.

Flatbed trucks carried players from Mosaic Stadium through part of downtown Regina that has been dubbed the "Green Mile" to the Saskatchewan legislature. Fans dressed in green and white cheered along the route, then followed the players to the rally at the provincial legislature.

The biggest cheers were for Riders head coach Corey Chamblin, quarterback Darian Durant and running back Kory Sheets.

"Let's go Riders," Chamblin shouted when he stepped up to the microphone at the rally, and the crowd echoed back.

"I love it," said Chamblin. "This is a special place, with special people, with a special team and we deserve the cup. On behalf of the premier and the mayor, we all have the month of December off."

Then came the chants of "Darian, Darian, Darian" and the Riders quarterback was greeted with wild enthusiasm.

"I remember when we came back from Calgary in 2009 and I told you guys that we'd be playing for plenty of Grey Cups ahead and I made that promise to you. And now I'm so glad, with the help of my guys, to finally bring that Grey Cup right back here to Saskatchewan where it belongs," Durant said to the crowd.

The crowd screamed when Durant went inside the legislature and raised the cup on a balcony over their heads.

The path to winning the CFL championship was years in the making for the Roughriders. The organization, including general manager Brendan Taman, had been working to put together a championship-winning team since 2011, when it was announced that Saskatchewan would host the 101st Grey Cup.

The players were high-fiving and hugging fans, who stood shoulder to shoulder at the rally in temperatures that dipped into the minus-teens.

But Regina resident Dean Dohms said he wouldn't miss it. Dohms brought his two children to the parade and rally, saying he has "authorized the hooky (from school) today."

"It's just such an amazing thing that we feel they need to take part in the whole thing," said Dohms. THE CANADIAN PRESS

How sweet it is

"We had a lot of ups and downs this season, but we stuck together, you guys stuck with us, and now this is the ultimate reward at the end of the day."

Riders quarterback Darian Durant

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Winter of extremes lies ahead, says forecast

Brace yourselves. Weather predicted to alternate between deep freezes and mild periods

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Saskatchewan residents should gear up for the usual winter wallop.

The Weather Network released its winter outlook on Tuesday, and experts are predicting that Saskatchewan will get a mixed bag during the next three months.

"It looks like a winter that will be characterized by extended periods of deep freeze followed by a period of more milder, gentler conditions," said Weather Network meteorologist Doug Gillham.

"Not just day-to-day type fluctuations, but a tendency to lock into a pattern for several weeks."

Gillham explained that while cold snaps can usually be attributed to air masses from Alaska and the northern Pacific, Siberia will be to blame this winter. The network is predicting that cross-polar flows across the North Pole will pummel the Prairies.

"Those can be exceptionally cold," he said.

"Sometimes the cold air is going to be directed at … the western Prairies, and other times the eastern Prairies. (Saskatchewan) is sort of in the middle, so you're going to see quite a few Arctic fronts come through."

He noted that air masses from northern Asia are usually colder than other masses. Instead of crossing an open ocean or massive area of land, he said, these flows are moving across nothing but snow and ice.

"There's more chance to modify if you take a longer route into central Canada," he said.

"A direct shot over the top of the pole doesn't have any chance to really warm up."

Although this winter may see longer cold periods, Gillham said it's considered near normal when compared to data from the last 30 years.

Get ready to lace up 'em up

Jordon Pyakutch, an employee with the Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), floods the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink at PotashCorp Plaza on Tuesday morning. It's time to sharpen your skates and brew some hot chocolate, as officials say the rink will be opening early this year. Officials say it's likely the rink will be ready for skaters this weekend, roughly two weeks earlier than usual. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Regina. First anti-bullying forum looking to make its mark

Stopping social media usage is not the answer to eliminating cyberbullying, University of Regina professor Alec Couros told hundreds of high school students on Tuesday.

Instead, he said, it's developing a better digital identity and responsibly using online tools.

"We have to teach kids to develop positive activities and behaviours on the Internet, so that they know cyberbullying is morally wrong and not even an option," Couros, a professor of information and communication technologies, told the teens at a forum at a Regina hotel.

Couros was the keynote speaker in the first of three annual anti-bullying forums that the provincial government has proposed with its action plan on the issue. The plan follows federal Bill C-13, or the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, which introduces tougher penalties for crimes such as transmitting an "intimate image" of another person without their consent.

More than 120 students from high schools across Saskatchewan attended the event. They joined online polls and logged into their social-media accounts during the forum to share their experiences and opinions about bullying.

At one point, almost all the students admitted to having been bullied and being bullies themselves in the past.

Sixteen-year-old twins Kenda and Kevina Mullock even mentioned seeing someone secretly post a classmate's photograph with a rude comment on Instagram.

"I couldn't believe what I was seeing and I immediately commented back and told him it wasn't very funny," Kevina said.

The classmate apologized the next day but didn't take the photo down.

However, the twins said it was a start.

"I think the best way we can stop cyberbullying is by being better role models online, like saying something nice to someone who's having a bad day," Kenda said.

SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO IN REGINA

It seems like nearly all of Saskatchewan, including Premier Brad Wall, showed up to congratulate the team in green on their big win last Sunday. The Grey Cup parade took over Regina on Tuesday, with the route travelling from Mosaic Stadium to the Legislative Building, where it finished off with thousands of fans rallying.

JACOB MORGAN/METRO
jacob.morgan@metronews.ca

Reunited, and it feels so good

1 Pomp and circumstance. Boys in blue go green for a day

Regina police bring the Grey Cup out of the legislative building after the Grey Cup parade.

2 Record setting. More than just a simple victory

Running back Kory Sheets, who broke the record for most yards rushed in a Grey Cup game, cheers during the procession.

3 Going long. All of Rider Nation went the distance this year

Quarterback Darian Durant speaks to a large crowd of fans outside the Saskatchewan Legislative Building.

4 Stand tall. The best part of the Grey Cup, is getting to lift it up

Defensive back Dwight Anderson hoists the Grey Cup over his head to fans on a balcony at the Saskatchewan Legislative Building.

5 100 years old. Cup doesn't show its age

The Grey Cup sits on a float with a Rider Nation flag behind it during the procession.

6 Premier of Rider Nation. Wall has a ball

Premier Brad Wall laughs while members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders speak to a large crowd.

ALL PHOTOS: LIAM RICHARDS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Suspected drone spotted hovering over Hull jail

'Flying object.'
No inmates were in courtyard at time, but jail can't verify whether any contraband fell

JOE LOFARO
Metro in Ottawa

Public-safety officials in Quebec don't know for sure whether it was a bird, a plane or a cape-wearing superhero, but something was in the sky hovering above the Hull jail Sunday morning, and they think it was a drone.

Philippe Desjardins, a spokesperson for the ministère de la sécurité publique, said a corrections officer saw a round, orange "flying object" about 15 centimetres in diameter in the sky above the prison courtyard at 11:20 a.m. The prison is located at 75 rue St-François, which is approximately five kilometres west of downtown Ottawa.

"The corrections officer found nothing on the ground in the prison," said Desjardins. "We have no evidence that the drone dropped something or crashed in the perimeter of the prison."

He said the jail confirmed that no inmates were in the courtyard at the time, but officials could not verify whether any contraband fell from the object.

The ministry oversees correctional facilities in the province of Quebec.

"The corrections officer takes this very seriously because they are afraid that kind of flying object (could have) dropped some kind of drugs or cellphone or something like that," said Desjardins. "They're very aware of different methods to stop these kinds of events."

The jail has closed its investigation, according to the ministry spokesperson.

Worried

"They are afraid that kind of flying object (could have) dropped some kind of drugs."

Philippe Desjardins, spokesperson for the ministère de la sécurité publique, on the corrections officer's fears

Tiny hobby drones pose privacy concern

Tiny, camera-equipped drones — some as small as birds or insects — could evade Canadian privacy law as people begin using the increasingly affordable aircraft to spy on others, warns the federal privacy czar.

Model aircraft flown by hobbyists may be "left entirely unregulated" as the federal government focuses on drones flown for commercial or police purposes, says a new study by the research group of the privacy commissioner's office.

In Canada, unmanned aerial vehicles — or UAVs — are regulated by Transport Canada as aircraft under the Canadian Aviation Regulations. But drones that weigh 35 kilograms or less do not require a special flight certificate when flown for recreational purposes.

The study says the exception poses concerns given that companies are beginning to sell small, inexpensive drones than can stream live video to smartphones.

The privacy commissioner's office worries these recreational drones could fuel the "growing trend" of people using technology to conduct surveillance on fellow citizens.

Drones are often outfitted with cameras but can also carry gizmos such as thermal imaging devices and licence-plate readers.

The RCMP has begun experimenting with small, helicopter-like drones that fit in the trunk of a car for chores such as photographing accident scenes.

But the devices come even smaller. So-called "biomimetic" drones are made to resemble plants, animals or birds. And portable ones are becoming easier to buy.

"Drones are already being sold in many retail stores," the study notes. "The next generation of recreational drones could prove to be even smaller and cheaper than the ones that currently exist."

Among the technologies that can be mounted on drones:

— high-powered zoom lenses;

— night vision, infrared and detail-enhancing capabilities;

— radar that can track people inside buildings or through clouds or dense foliage;

— video software that can recognize specific people, events or objects and flag movements or changes in routine as suspicious;

— distributed video, where several drones work in sync with multiple video cameras.

The study concludes that drone operations involving surveillance of people would be covered by "the same privacy law requirements" as any other data collection practice. However, it says organizations using drones will be expected to "genuinely address" the privacy implications of their use and ensure compliance with laws and guidelines.

"Furthermore, the advent of the smartphone has made model aircraft, and other such tools for surveillance, data or image capture, a plausible option for recreational use by the public," the study says.

"The collection or use of personal information via model aircraft for personal purposes may reach beyond the scope of privacy law."

So far, there has been no indication that drones are being used in Canada for general surveillance or to gather personal information, the study adds.

But that could change as more of the devices take to the skies. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Life must go on in battered Philippines

A mother cuddling her baby crosses muddy ground amid devastated buildings around an evacuation centre in the central Philippine province of Leyte on Tuesday. Leyte was right in the destruction path of Super Typhoon Haiyan, which pummelled central Philippines on Nov. 8. BULLIT MARQUEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bit his victim

Homework helps track would-be thief

Police in Barrie, Ont., say homework assignments led investigators to a would-be thief who put the bite on his victim.

Police were called to a home around 5 a.m. on Nov. 20 to investigate a report of a young man attempting to steal items from a parked car.

Investigators say the homeowner had confronted the suspect and was bitten three times on the forearm. However, the victim was able to grab the suspect's backpack during the scuffle.

Officers searched the bag and found a binder that contained several homework assignments that led them to arrest a 16-year-old on Monday.

The teen is charged with attempted theft and prowl by night. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Online

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Report: Transport Canada rail oversight lacking in key areas

'Significant weaknesses.' Issues include poorly trained inspectors, lack of route knowledge and absence of followup when problems are found

A rail-safety audit completed just days before the deadly July train crash in Lac-Mégantic, Que., found "significant weaknesses" in Transport Canada's oversight of railways.

Those weaknesses include a lack of knowledge of rail routes used to transport dangerous goods, too few safety auditors, poorly trained inspectors and an absence of followup or sanctions when safety problems are found.

"What we identified was that there were weaknesses in all aspects of how Transport Canada is overseeing rail safety systems in the (rail) companies," auditor general Michael Ferguson told a news conference Tuesday.

His report found that only 14 safety audits of Canada's 31 federally regulated railways had been completed in the previous three years — just a quarter of the audits Transport Canada had expected to carry out.

Moreover, "the scope of the department's audits is very limited," stated the report.

And eight of those 14 audits focused on just the two largest operators, CN and Canadian Pacific, leaving Canada's smaller operators largely unchecked.

One of those small rail companies was the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic, whose unattended, single-operator train carrying 7.6 million litres of volatile crude oil derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic on July 6, killing 47 people.

The auditor general's report, which was wrapped up barely a week before the crash, explicitly states it makes no assessment of the Lac-Mégantic disaster.

The centre of Lac-Mégantic, Que., wiped away under a clutter of smouldering tanker cars on July 7. An auditor general report found "significant weaknesses" in Transport Canada's railway oversight. RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

However, Ferguson acknowledged Tuesday that the deadliest rail accident in Canadian history highlights the audit's significance.

"Any time there's a serious, significant incident, it's always going to raise questions," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Other report highlights

- The September 2012 recall of seven million kilograms of beef products from XL Foods in Alberta highlighted serious problems at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
- The Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP need to tighten border security work and take steps to better measure how effective they are at keeping unauthorized immigrants out.
- The Canada Revenue Agency did a good job of following up on leaked reports of Canadians with offshore accounts in Liechtenstein.
- The Canadian government has done little since 2005 to improve its online services for citizens.

Prisons too secretive, inquest told

From left: Julian Roy, lawyer for Ashley Smith's family; Breese Davies, lawyer for the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies; and Richard Macklin, lawyer for Ontario's child advocate, walk outside during Smith's prison-death inquest in Toronto on June 25. COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Only an independent, external watchdog can force improvements on a secretive prison system deeply resistant to change, an inquest jury heard Tuesday.

Proper accountability is desperately needed to prevent a recurrence of the Ashley Smith tragedy, a lawyer for a women's prisoner advocacy group told jurors.

In closing submissions, Breese Davies said it would be useless to simply recommend a culture shift at Correctional Service Canada.

"This inquest has taught us the risks of allowing CSC to continue to operate under a cloud of secrecy," Davies said.

Speaking for the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Davies said prison authorities need to focus less on security and more on therapy when it comes to mentally ill and chronically self-harming women.

Davies, who joined with Smith's family in urging jurors to return a verdict of homicide in the teen's choking death, said CSC has done little to deal with the issues that led to the tragedy.

Quoted

"They have lost their moral compass. The cloud of secrecy has to be lifted."

Breese Davies, lawyer for the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, on Correctional Service Canada

"CSC cannot be trusted to fix the problems," she said.

The deeply troubled Smith, 19, strangled herself in her segregation cell in Kitchener, Ont., on Oct. 19, 2007, as guards delayed going in to try to save her.

Davies opposed a finding of suicide or accidental death given evidence the warden had ordered underlings to stay out of Smith's cell as long as the inmate was still breathing.

"The order was a well researched, meticulously-crafted policy that we now know was a major factor in Ashley's death," Davies said.

"It was extreme hesitation that caused her death that day." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Medical pot. Health Canada mail-out error leads to firings, robbery: Law firm

At least three medical marijuana patients have lost their jobs and one person has been the victim of a home invasion since Health Canada outed 40,000 medical pot access program participants in a mass mail-out gaffe last week, according to law firm Branch MacMaster.

The B.C. firm has filed a class-action lawsuit against Health Canada over the privacy breach and says members of the country's medical marijuana program now worry about being attached to the stigma that comes along with using marijuana and fear they may be victim of a robbery. What's worse is the fact that the patients have also been exposed as having diseases, the firm says.

"Individuals that are part of the access program must also, in order to qualify for the program, suffer from a small number of diseases and illnesses that actually themselves come with a public stigma as well," said Branch MacMaster lawyer Kate Saunders.

"It gets even worse than just being outed as users of marijuana; you are being outed as having diseases such as HIV or Multiple Sclerosis or any number of other diseases you are required to have in order to be able to be qualify for the program."

The named plaintiff in the case, Jason Wilcox, was forced to explain to his 14-year-old daughter that he uses marijuana after she picked up the mail on her way home from school. He says Health Canada forced him to have a conversation with his teenaged daughter that he wasn't quite ready to have.

"She went out to get the mail and asked me, 'Hey Dad, what's this?'" said Wilcox, the founder and director of Cannabis in Canada Society.

Health Canada Deputy Minister George Da Pont said the format of the mailing was the result of an "administrative error."

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO IN OTTAWA

Egyptian police fire water cannons to disperse a protest by secular anti-government activists in Cairo, Tuesday — the first implementation of a new law forbidding protests held without a permit. MOHAMMED ASAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egypt faces growing unrest over new law

Stifling Islamists and non-Islamists alike. Activists say law is harsher than curbs on protests during Hosni Mubarak's rule

Egypt's police fired water cannons Tuesday to disperse two protests by dozens of secular anti-government activists in Cairo, the security forces' first implementation of a controversial new law forbidding protests held without a permit from authorities.

The unrest points to the growing backlash against the law, which imposes heavy restrictions on protests, among the non-Islamist political factions that rallied behind the military's ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi.

Now some in the loose coalition are growing impatient with signs the military-backed interim government is taking the country down a more authoritarian path.

Many non-Islamist activists say the law aims to silence any dissent ahead of a referendum on an amended constitution. Those activists oppose provisions in the revised constitution entrenching greater powers for the military and the president, and curtailing rights to free trials and assembly.

The government says the law is needed to restore security and rein in near daily protests by Morsi supporters demanding his reinstatement. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Secular activists

"They don't want anyone in the streets any more. Not us, not the Islamists."

Rasha Azab, a secular activist, at a rally in Cairo to commemorate an activist, Gaber Salah, killed by police a year ago.

Scottish government sets out blueprint for independence

An independent Scotland would continue to use the pound sterling as its currency, remain in the European Union and join the NATO military alliance, Scotland's government said Tuesday.

In the first detailed outline of Scotland's political future as an independent country, First Minister Alex Salmond's administration set out the ways it said the nation would prosper if it left the United Kingdom. In a referendum on Sept. 18, 2014, Scots will be asked whether they want Scotland to become independent.

The document says independence will create a more democratic Scotland and a more prosperous country.

Independence day would be on March 24, 2016, if the people of Scotland vote 'yes' to going it alone.

Salmond called for the historic referendum after his Scottish National Party in 2011 won a one-seat majority in the Scottish Parliament, the devolved assembly in Edinburgh that has powers over health, education and law.

Polls have consistently put support for independence at between 25 per cent and 30 per cent over the past three years, with support for remaining in the union at between 45 per cent and 50 per cent. But the number of undecided voters is significant. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scotland

Scotland is part of the U.K. but it has had its own Parliament since 1999 and has its own set of laws.

- The governing Scottish National Party supports independence, while the opposition Labour and Conservative parties both oppose it.

Nepal

Oldest Buddhist shrine unearthed

Archaeologists in Nepal say they have discovered traces of a wooden structure dating from the 6th century B.C. that they believe is the world's oldest Buddhist shrine.

Kosh Prasad Acharya, who teamed with archaeologists from Britain's Durham University, said Tuesday the structure was unearthed inside the Mayadevi Temple in Lumbini. Buddha, also known as Siddhartha Gautama, is thought to have been born in about the 6th century B.C. at the temple site. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iran accord. Obama admin., Senate spar over sanctions

An agreement secured with its greatest global foe, the Obama administration pleaded Tuesday with a more familiar if often difficult negotiating partner not to scuttle last weekend's Iran nuclear deal: Congress.

Just back from his diplomatic triumph in Europe, Secretary of State John Kerry delivered a video message to legislators as he urged that they not introduce new economic measures against Iran at a time the U.S. and world powers are withdrawing some sanctions in exchange for the Iranians curtailing their nuclear program.

Kerry asserted that now is the time to get to work on a final agreement that removes any suspicion that Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons.

Although Kerry was reaching out personally to key senators, Democrats and Republicans appeared determined to increase the pressure on Tehran. Many in Congress are skeptical, if not outright hostile, to the deal reached in Geneva. Two key senators already are at work on legislation to reinstate the full force of sanctions and impose new ones if Iran doesn't make good on its pledge to roll back its nuclear program. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Climate-change refugee claim denied

New Zealand. Judge rejects Kiribati man's claim that rising sea levels make it too dangerous for family to return to island home

In his decision Tuesday, a New Zealand High Court judge rejected Ioane Teitiota's claim that he should be granted refugee status because of climate change, saying Teitiota did not fit the definition of a refugee under international guidelines because he was not being directly persecuted.

Judge John Priestley said if he broadened the definition, millions more people worldwide suffering from natural disasters or warfare would be eligible to become refugees.

Teitiota and his wife moved to New Zealand from the low-lying Pacific island nation of Kiribati in 2007. He argued that rising sea levels make it too dangerous for him and his family to return there.

Since moving to New Zealand, Teitiota and his wife have had three children. All five are now likely to face deportation, because citizenship isn't automatically granted by birth in New Zealand.

The judge said Teitiota and his children might have mounted a case to stay on humanitarian grounds had they not overstayed their visas.

"Unfortunately for the applicant, because he has chosen to remain illegally in New Zealand, he is, under current law, precluded from applying for an immigration permit on humanitarian grounds," he said.

Kiribati, an impoverished string of 33 coral atolls located about halfway between Hawaii and Australia, has about 103,000 people and has been identified by scientists as being among the nations most vulnerable to climate change. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frightening predictions

A panel of climate scientists recently issued a report predicting oceans could rise by as much as a metre by the end of the century.

- If that were to happen, much of Kiribati would simply disappear.

Good luck trying to get this cat out of a tree ...

Salam, 5, an African lion, stands on the branches of a tree at the Ramt Gan safari near Tel Aviv, Israel on Tuesday. Tree-climbing lions are relatively uncommon and are best known for their populations in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park and Tanzania's Lake Manyara National Park.

ARIEL SCHALIT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Into the abyss. Bosnian pond suddenly disappears

The villagers of the remote northwestern Bosnian village of Sanica have been in shock since a pond vanished two weeks ago.

The pond was some 20 metres in diameter and about eight meters deep. Now, the "abyss," as the villagers have dubbed the crater, is some 50 metres wide and 30 metres deep — and growing.

"I sat here only a day before it happened, sipping plum brandy," villager Cemal Hasan said. "And then, there was panic. Fish were jumping out, and a big plum tree was pulled down like someone yanked it with a hook."

Scientists say it is not uncommon that ponds and small lakes suddenly disappear. They say it could be caused by drying underground water currents or changes in soil drainage due to irrigation.

An alternative spooky explanation: the owner of the pond took it with him when he died about a month ago. "His daughter saw him walk on the lake the night he died," said another villager, Rezak Motanic.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fuad Cemal holds up a photo of a pond that disappeared in the village of Sanica, Bosnia. AMEL EMRIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Astronomers captivated by comet's journey towards the sun

Comet ISON is teasing the solar system as it dances with the sun, and it's giving astronomers mixed signals.

The icy comet will be only about 1.6 million kilometres away from the sun's superhot surface during its close encounter on Thursday.

On Monday, it looked like it was about to die even before it got there. On Tuesday, it appeared healthy again.

"We have never seen a comet like this," Naval Research Laboratory astrophysicist Karl Battams said during a NASA news conference Tuesday. "It has been behaving strangely."

Because it is so close to the sun, ISON will likely not be visible from Earth on Thursday — except via a fleet of NASA telescopes and spacecraft aimed at the comet as it gets closest to the sun at 1:37 p.m. EST, he said. And it will be a few hours before scientists know whether the comet survives.

But even if the comet dies, Johns Hopkins University scientist Carey Lisse said there's a good chance that people on Earth will get an interesting cosmic show. The comet's remnants could paint the sky with a wide swath of green in the Northern Hemisphere.

The comet — about 1 km wide — is made up of loosely packed ice and dirt, essentially a dirty snowball. It is a "dinosaur bone," from the formation of the solar system 4.5 billion years ago, Lisse said. It has been in a "deep freeze" for billions of years in the Oort cloud, a vast area of comets and debris that never formed into planets that's between 724.17 billion kilometres and 14.4 million kilometres from the sun, Lisse said. The comet is racing around the sun, pulled close by our star's massive gravity, which can also break apart the dirty icy core.

If the comet does make it around the sun intact and returns past Earth, the Northern Hemisphere should get some good naked-eye views just before sunrise and just after sunset in the first couple weeks of December, Lisse said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Central Africa

Congo's okapi nearly extinct

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) says the Congo's national symbol, the okapi, is on the brink of extinction.

The IUCN's Red List of endangered species, published Tuesday, says the population of the okapi, also known as the "forest giraffe," has dwindled because of poaching and habitat loss.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.K.

Wolves escape from British zoo

Zoo staff have killed three wolves who escaped from their pen at Colchester Zoo in southeastern England.

A fourth wandering wolf was subdued with a tranquilizer dart and recaptured, while a fifth quickly returned to its pen on its own Tuesday.

Officials said they do not know how the fence around the pen became damaged, despite being checked on a daily basis.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

French bill cracks down on prostitution

France's government is pushing one of Europe's toughest laws against prostitution and sex trafficking, and other countries are watching closely. Advocates hope that a draft French law going to parliament Wednesday will help change long-held attitudes toward the world's oldest profession — by punishing the customer and protecting the prostitute.

The bill, however, is facing resistance and has prompted petitions defending those who buy sex. Signatories include screen icon Catherine Deneuve —who played a prostitute in the cult film Belle de Jour — and crooner Charles Aznavour.

Prostitution is currently legal in France, but brothels, pimping and soliciting in public are illegal.

The proposed law would introduce a 1,500-euro ($2,000) fine — rising to 3,000 euro at the second offence — for the clients of prostitutes. They could also be forced to attend classes aimed at highlighting the harms of prostitution.

The bill aims to decriminalize the estimated 40,000 prostitutes in France, by scrapping a 2003 law that bans soliciting on the streets, and making it easier for foreign prostitutes to remain legally in France if they enter a process to get out of prostitution. One of the bill's authors, Maud Olivier, says it's about "getting rid the consequence of unequal and archaic relationships between men and women."

The proposed law — written by a group of lawmakers from both right and left and backed by the Socialist government — follows the example of Sweden, which passed similar legislation in 1999.

A report commissioned by the Swedish government showed that the number of people involved in street prostitution in Sweden's three largest cities dropped from around 730 in 1999 to 300-430 a year in the 10 years after that. At the same time, street prostitution in neighbouring Norway and Denmark increased.

Opponents of the French bill fear that cracking down will push prostitutes into a dangerous position: Being forced to hide, they would be even more at the mercy of pimps and violent clients, and cut off from the organizations able to help them.

And earlier this month, a petition emerged, signed by 60 celebrities, including Deneuve and Aznavour, saying, "Without supporting or promoting prostitution, we reject the penalization of those who prostitute themselves and those who buy their services, and we ask for a real debate without ideological prejudice."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teen hitman back in the U.S.

Crime. 17-year-old released from prison after serving three years for committing murders for Mexican drug cartel

In this Dec. 3, 2010 file photo, Mexican soldiers present Edgar "El Ponchis" Jimenez Lugo to the media in the city of Cuernavaca, Mexico. ANTONIO SIERRA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, FILE

A 17-year-old U.S. citizen who acknowledged being a killer for a Mexican drug cartel finished his three-year juvenile-offender term for homicide, kidnapping and drug and weapons possession and returned to the United States.

The interior secretary of southern Morelos state, Jorge Messeguer, said Edgar Jimenez Lugo had been released, though he added it wasn't clear if the teen had been rehabilitated.

"Being able to say whether he's been rehabilitated, that would be risky. I wouldn't really dare say that, because obviously the crimes he committed were so severe," Messeguer said.

He said Jimenez went to San Antonio, Tex., where he has family, and apparently will go to a residential support facility there, though he didn't know its name.

It does not appear Jimenez faces any charges in the United States. The U.S. Embassy said it would not publicly discuss the case due to privacy considerations.

The embassy said in a statement that it was "closely coordinating with our Mexican counterparts and appropriate authorities in the United States" regarding the release.

In 2011, at age 14, Jimenez confessed to killing four people whose beheaded bodies were found suspended from a bridge.

He was born in San Diego, Calif., but was raised in Mexico by his grandmother. Authorities quoted Jimenez as saying he had been forcibly recruited by drug traffickers when he was 11 and confessing to working for the South Pacific drug cartel, led by reputed drug lord Hector Beltran Leyva.

Jimenez was trying to return to the United States when he was caught in 2010.

Quoted

"Being able to say whether he's been rehabilitated, that would be risky."

Jorge Messeguer, interior secretary of the southern Morelos state, on the release of Edgar Jimenez Lugo from prison

He and a sister were arrested in Morelos, south of Mexico City, as they tried to board a plane to Tijuana, where they planned to cross the border and reunite with their mother in San Diego. When he was handed over to federal prosecutors, the boy calmly said in front of cameras that he participated in four killings while drugged and under threat. The bodies were found in the city of Cuernavaca, which is in Morelos.

Jimenez served his three-year sentence, the maximum for juveniles, at a juvenile detention centre in Morelos.

The state was formerly controlled by the Beltran Leyva gang, which broke up after alleged leader Arturo Beltran Leyva died in a shootout with Mexican marines in 2009.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brrr-ning strong: Olympic torch takes icy dip

In this photo provided by olympictorch2014.com, torchbearer Natalia Usacheva, ice-cold-water swimmer, exits the Tatyshev Channel of the Yenisei River during the Olympic torch relay in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, on Tuesday. The 65,000-kilometre Sochi torch relay, which started on Oct. 7, is the longest in Olympic history. The torch has even been flown into space. OLYMPICTORCH2014.COM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nestora Salgado

Family pushes for vigilante's release

The family of U.S. woman Nestora Salgado, who leads a vigilante police force in Mexico, has enlisted a human rights group to push for her release after three months in custody on kidnapping allegations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brazil

Senator's sons' helicopter seized

Brazilian police officials say nearly 450 kilograms of cocaine were found in a helicopter owned by Sen. Zeze Perella's two sons.

A statement from the Federal Police says the helicopter was seized Sunday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Calls to step down

U.S. rep. in rehab to return to work

An aide to U.S. Rep. Trey Radel, who recently pleaded guilty to cocaine possession, says the Republican is focusing on rehab and will return to work as soon as possible, despite calls for him to step down.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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City of Saskatoon

For more information, visit www.saskatoon.ca and look under 'A' for Animal Services.

ANIMAL SERVICES

Rogers shoots, scores with $5.2B NHL multimedia deal

12-year term.
Historic pact will diminish CBC's role in HNIC

Canada's hockey TV landscape underwent a seismic shift Tuesday as Rogers Communications wrested control of NHL multimedia rights with a blockbuster 12-year, $5.2-billion agreement that will preserve Hockey Night in Canada but limit CBC's role in the iconic broadcast.

The deal, the largest in NHL history, gives Rogers national rights to all NHL games, including the playoffs and Stanley Cup final, on all its platforms in all languages.

"It will be the NHL like never before," Rogers Media president Keith Pelley promised at a packed news conference Tuesday, touting a "transformational day" for the industry, as well as Rogers' position as a sports broadcasting titan.

A sub-licensing agreement with CBC allows the public broadcaster to continue airing Hockey Night in Canada on Saturday nights for four years, while TVA in Quebec earned all of the Canadian French-language multimedia rights.

But the Rogers coup includes rights to the venerable Hockey Night in Canada brand, allowing Rogers to air the weekly staple across all its platforms, including City and Sportsnet.

"Sometimes it's almost surreal — acquiring the most coveted content in all of Canada, and there is nothing even close, which is the national rights to Hockey Night in Canada," Pelley told reporters after the news conference. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Knew when to fold 'em

The CBC "was not in a position to spend taxpayers money on this game of high stakes."

CBC president Hubert Lacroix on the NHL's high financial expectations, which he said the national broadcaster couldn't meet

The triumphant trio, in colour-coordinated duds: Rogers president and CEO Nadir Mohamed, centre, with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, left, and Keith Pelley, president of Rogers Media, at a news conference on Tuesday. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The good ol' hockey deal

The new deal is raising questions about the future of CBC's talent, especially Don Cherry. Rogers president Keith Pelley said it was too soon to answer those questions.

- It appears TSN is also on the outside looking in. The NHL's news release early Tuesday made no mention of the all-sports network, which currently airs a package of regular-season and playoff games.
- Bell Media vice-president of communications Scott Henderson said TSN would have 10 Leafs games next season under a regional agreement and that, starting in 2015, the network would have 26 regional Leafs games.
- The deal could put the iconic Hockey Night in Canada theme song in limbo. TSN has owned the rights to the jingle since 2008 after CBC was unable to negotiate a new agreement with the song's composer.

Ontario, Michigan at odds over nuclear waste

Ordinarily, a proposal to bury radioactive waste in a scenic area would inspire "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) protests from local residents.

But conventional wisdom has been turned on its head in southwestern Ontario, where Bruce Power wants to entomb waste from its nuclear plants 680 metres below the surface near Lake Huron.

Some of the strongest support comes from the Kincardine area near the would-be disposal site at the Bruce Power complex, the world's largest nuclear power station, which produces one-fourth of all electricity generated in Canada's most heavily populated province. Nuclear is a way of life here, and many residents have jobs connected to the industry.

Meanwhile, the loudest objections are coming from elsewhere in Canada and the U.S. — particularly Michigan, which shares the Lake Huron shoreline with Ontario. Critics are aghast at the idea.

They don't buy assurances that the waste would rest far beneath the lake's greatest depths and be encased in rock formations that have been stable for 450 million years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lake Huron just beyond a fence enclosing a section of the Bruce Power nuclear complex. Plans to bury radioactive waste near Kincardine, Ont., has local support, but Americans have raised concerns. JOHN FLESHER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Test case

The decision on the $1 billion Canadian project could influence the broader debate over burying nuclear waste deep underground, said Per Peterson, a nuclear engineering professor at the University of California at Berkeley, who served on a national commission that studied the waste issue in the United States.

Fact of life

"We don't have the knee-jerk reaction when someone says 'nuclear' that other people do. We grew up with it."

Joanne Robbins, general manager of the chamber of commerce in nearby Saugeen Shores, Ont.

159 members

Diplomats fail to reach global trade deal: WTO chief

Negotiators have failed to craft the first global trade deal in more than a decade, which could have given the world economy a $1-trillion boost, the director-general of the World Trade Organization said.

Diplomats from the WTO's 159 members tried ahead of a summit where ministers were to have signed the deal next week. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 94.97¢ (+0.17¢)

TSX 13,349.77 (-122.45)

OIL $93.68 US (-41¢)

GOLD $1,241.40 US (+ 20¢)

Natural gas: $3.86 US (+ 2¢)
Dow Jones: 16,072.80 (+ 0.26)

Study. Technology will render many jobs obsolete

Jobs for tech savvy social media experts will be as obsolete in 10 years, as will more traditional occupations such as taxi dispatcher and toll booth operator, according to a new study released Tuesday by online employment site Workopolis.

The study predicts that social media experts will become a victim of advancing technology as many other occupations.

That is because today's youngsters are already immersed in platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and so will enter the job market familiar with social media.

The study also projects that taxi drivers will be increasingly hailed by an app on a smartphone rather than getting calls through a dispatcher and that toll booths will "spit out" exact change making operators unnecessary. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Random biz fact of the day

97%

97 per cent of recruiters use LinkedIn, 51 per cent use Facebook, and 49 per cent use Twitter. WORKOPOLIS

Dust off that interview suit

Meanwhile, a separate study — based on a survey of 2,500 Canadians between Nov. 1 and Nov. 11 — found that Canadians were feeling a bit more optimistic about their careers, with 50 per cent of respondents saying the believe the will have a harder time finding employment in 2014. While that may seem high, it was down from 58 per cent earlier.

- For job seekers getting out their resumes, Tara Talbot, vice-president of human resources at Workopolis, recommended highlighting key skills they would bring to a job and their past employment achievements while avoiding excessive detail.
- Among skills being sought in the workplace are the ability to analyze data, speak more than one language and proficiency with mobile apps.

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Douglas Coupland

Douglas Coupland's latest novel, Worst. Person. Ever., is available from Random House Canada.

Day 18

metronews.ca/temp

Temp Empathizes with Ducklings

I stayed for a while at Chantelle's, but declined her vodka as I still had to drive — to the oil refinery to meet with Kyle who answered a meet-for-coffee text with: Blue gate, refinery north road, 7:45 look for billboard with photo of happy mallard duck family.

Indeed I found the Duck Family portrait with the banner caption, Always Putting the Environment First. It stood in front of a crude-oil cracking facility straight out of a sci-fi film where mutants on a slave planet convert poor people into snacks for the master species.

"Isn't this place great?" asked Kyle, coming in from the parking lot and wearing his still brand-new journeyman's outfit. "I start on the eight o'clock night shift. I'm totally stoked."

"Kyle, this place is freaky, and who knows what toxins there are in there."

"Shannon, for a guy with no degree, this is a good foot in the door, and if I play my cards right I can be a supervisor in a few years."

My heart felt like one of those little ducklings onto which a massive Acme cartoon anvil has fallen from a mile up. "Where's Mr. Burns' office?"

"Admin's about a mile thataway. Why are you so bummed out? I've got a real grown-up-job job. You should be happy for me."

I was silent.

"And look, I can maybe go work in Libya or Abu Dhabi and make crazy money. That's where the action is. Six months in the Emirates — business class ticket each way — live in a walled compound with satellite TV and well-stocked fridges — the sky's the limit."

I sighed.

"You're always looking for fun facts. Did you know that one barrel of oil — 42 gallons — yields 44 gallons of petroleum products?"

"I didn't."

"It's because when crude oil is converted, it increases in volume. Roughly half of each barrel of crude oil is turned into gasoline for transportation."

When did Kyle drink the "New Kyle" Kool-Aid? I never saw this coming.

"Shannon, for a guy with no degree, this is a good foot in the door, and if I play my cards right I can be a supervisor in a few years."

He asked, "Shannon, why did you want to see me, anyway? Trying to get me involved in your evil plot with the Chinese?"

"As a matter of fact, yes."

"I don't think I'm the espionage type."

"It's not espionage."

"Look, now's not the time for this. I'm going to be late on my first day if I don't get in right now." He started edging backwards toward the entryway. "Besides, this is where I'm at in my life right now. I'm an oil guy."

"Promise me you'll call if you change your mind?"

"Gotta go, Shannon. Bye."

I waved goodbye and got back into Danimal's BMW. I turned on the radio where Dust in the Wind by Kansas was playing and promptly began bawling.

TO BE CONTINUED ...

Random fact of the day

Dolly Parton once anonymously entered a "Dolly Parton look-alike contest" but lost to a drag queen.

SOURCE: WTFFUNFACT.COM

Random biz fact of the day

72%

A majority of job seekers says it's important that a company offers flexible schedules when they are deciding whether to take a position.

SOURCE: CAREERBUILDER

The clock is ticking

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

TEMP is ... well, temporary

Douglas Coupland's 20-day novella is a pop-up project and will disappear from our website this Monday at 12:01 a.m. EST. If you've missed an instalment, there are still five days to catch up at temp.metronews.ca — before it disappears. METRO

Relationships

Temp work, temp love

With no job security or benefits and fluctuating schedules, temporary employment is affecting personal relationships.

A study by United Way Toronto and McMaster University found those doing precarious work — including contract, temporary and casual workers — are more likely to be single.

Among those aged 25 to 34, 31 per cent with secure employment are single, compared to 54 per cent with precarious jobs.

PHOEBE HO/FOR METRO

ISTOCK

Carried away

Tittle tattle

We asked you to share your office secrets and you answered:

"During a tough year of merger and acquisition, the president of the company made a speech at the Christmas party and said, 'We will shoot the laggards and carry the wounded!' As the president left the stage, a friend, obviously having partaken of a few too many, ran at the president, jumped on his back and yelled, 'Yahoo, carry me, I'm wounded.' And yes, he was carried — carried out by security!" METRO READER

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SURVIVAL IS MEDIUM-RARE

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

If you're an animal, you must be confused.

Take this new survey from Insights West in Vancouver, which shows that 88 per cent of British Columbians oppose trophy hunting.

That's the good news. The bad news is that almost the same number — 85 per cent — think it's OK to eat you.

Even more confusing, 73 per cent think it's OK to hunt animals for food.

If you could speak human, you'd probably point out that it doesn't really matter if you end up over someone's mantel or on the dinner table.

Either way, you're just as dead.

Then of course you might be a dog or a cat, a beneficiary of the $6.5 billion that Canadians spend annually on their pets. Still, there's a risk you might end up in an animal shelter, where more than 51,000 cats, dogs and "others" are euthanized annually in Canada.

Be thankful you're not a pet turkey, especially around this time of year. You could get really confused and dead.

You also might want to avoid being a lab rat. As many as 80 million rats and mice are used for research each year, and guess what happens when you're finished serving medical science.

Yup, you're dead.

If you're looking for some evidence that attitudes are changing for the better, wag your tail. Not only do people oppose trophy hunting, only 15 per cent are in favour of killing animals for their fur. Good news if you're a beaver, though it might mean you're more likely to be sheared alive.

The Insights West survey also says that only 38 per cent are in favour of using animals in rodeos, which means you're less likely to get rope burn, spur sores and any of the other hazards that make the West Wild.

And only 56 per cent think you should be caged in a zoo where you're expected to spend the rest of your life wearing out a concrete trough from padding back and forth, mooching for peanuts.

So if you can get over the fact that 85 per cent want you for dinner, you might think things are looking up. Especially if you're not a member of the 21,286 species threatened with extinction, according to the 49th annual Red List, a census of the world's animals maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, updated just this week. And if you're a Hawaiian Crow or Wyoming Toad, you probably don't mind living at the zoo, because your species is among the 61 extinct in the wild.

Of course, if you're a member of one of the 799 completely extinct species, you're dead.

Probably the best kind of animal you can be is a big nasty critter at the top of the food chain in an inhospitable region of the world where people don't like to go — like a polar bear in the Arctic.

On second thought, if global warming keeps up, there won't be any Arctic. And you know what that means.

ZOOM

Sometimes the dentist is a zoo

SHANE GIBSON/METRO WINNIPEG

Aurora the polar bear goes under

Talk about a risky procedure.

On Tuesday morning veterinarians at the Assiniboine Park Zoo's animal hospital performed dental surgery on Aurora, the 11-month-old female cub who recently arrived at the zoo from Churchill, Man.

Thankfully Aurora was anesthetized for the work, which Dr. Chris Enright, who heads up veterinarian services at the zoo, said isn't too different than what people get done at the dentist.

The zoo said during the procedure, veterinary staff removed two of the polar bear's baby teeth and one adult tooth that were broken and infected.

SHANE GIBSON/METRO WINNIPEG

Rarrrhhh!

"Right now she's only about 110 pounds ... but she still has the attitude of a 600-pound predator. So it's certainly not safe to just ask her to open her mouth."

Dr. Chris Enright
Head of veterinarian services
Assiniboine Park Zoo

Friends at the zoo

- Aurora was brought to the zoo about a month ago.
- There are three other bears: Hudson (the oldest, and from the Toronto Zoo), Storm and another 11-month-old female who was named Kaska on Monday.

Clickbait

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

CONTRIBUTED

Last week, AOL announced it was shutting down Winamp, one of the oldest, most venerable digital music players. Dating back to the days of Napster, Winamp was a favourite among music lovers who wanted something different than stock programs like iTunes and Windows Media Player. Sadly, the application will no longer be available for download as of Dec. 20. Fortunately, there are some free alternatives out there for those who don't need a Genius to tell them what to listen to.

Foobar2000 (foobar2000.org):
Offering a simple yet powerful interface, Foobar2000 isn't the drag on your computer's resources that iTunes is. It plays almost every audio file type imaginable and lets users tag their own music metadata.

VLC Media Player (videolan.org):
Arguably the most popular open-source media player on the market, VLC is a capable replacement. As a bonus, it's available on Windows, Mac, iOS, Android and Linux, so it meets the definition of "cross-platform."

AIMP (aimp2.us):
If you just can't let Winamp go, try this clone. AIMP's interface is almost identical to Winamp's, right down to the 18-channel equalizer and modular windows.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: Rogers' #NHL deal will see them assume control over #HNIC. What do you want left the same? What do you want changed?

@Fontaine_D: It won't be long before we finally see the last of Don Cherry on HNIC. Thank you Rogers!

@cjoanporter: Question: Does all this #HNIC moving to Rogers news mean I'll no longer have to see/hear Don Cherry? Bc then I'm all for it.

@scottmahoney94: yay monopoly

@bonnaventure: replace Don Cherry with an upturned mop w/ bucket for head. Replace Ron Maclean with Stuart McLean. Add @strombo 4 some reason less hockey, more 'who wore it best' segments.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: saskatoonletters@metronews.ca

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Action

Homefront

Director. Gary Fleder

Stars. Jason Statham, James Franco

The first thing you need to know about Homefront is that it was scripted by Sylvester Stallone. That pretty much says everything about the thriller's severe tone, stock characterizations and messy combat choreography. Silly, but viscerally satisfying, Jason Statham plays an underground DEA agent hiding in backwoods Louisiana until his cover is blown and old enemies come calling. **TEVE GOW**

Animated

Frozen

Directors. Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee

Stars. Kristen Bell, Josh Gad, Idina Menzel

The Princesses of Arendelle, Anna (Kristen Bell) and Elsa (Idina Menzel), are polar opposites. Anna is a warm-hearted adventurer while Elsa has the awesome power to manifest ice and snow from her fingertips. When Elsa accidentally plunges her kingdom into an endless winter Anna sets off with mountain man Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), his reindeer and a sun-worshipping snowman named Olaf (Josh Gad) to save the realm. Frozen has all the elements of classic Disney — amusing animals, catchy songs and two princesses — but wants for more complex characters. **RICHARD CROUSE**

Showtimes

Galaxy Cinemas Saskatoon
347 2nd Ave. South
Frozen 3D (STC) No Passes Wed-Thu 6:50-9:55
Homefront (14A) Wed-Thu 6:40-9:45

Hollywood keeps looking to Asia for, um, inspiration

Remakes or ripoffs?
From Godzilla to classic Westerns, U.S. studios know they can find fodder in the East

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

Elizabeth Olsen and Josh Brolin in Oldboy. CONTRIBUTED

Everyone knows Godzilla was a superstar in Japan long before he went Hollywood and started stomping American landmarks into matchsticks. Despite making his debut in 1954, the King of the Monsters had to wait until 1998's Roland Emmerich film Godzilla to be to be fully reimagined by an American studio.

So you knew of Godzilla's roots, but did you also know The Magnificent Seven and A Fistful of Dollars were remakes of Asian films?

Add to that list this weekend's Oldboy, a Spike Lee re-creation of a violent Chanwook Park film. Josh Brolin plays a man searching for answers as to why he was kidnapped and held in solitary confinement for twenty years.

Spike Lee says the original director only offered up one piece of advice. "Josh went to Park and asked for his blessing," he told MTV. "Park gave it, and the one thing he said to Josh — which Josh related to me — was, 'Make a different film; don't do the same thing I did.' (So) that's the way we did it."

Unlikely hit

The best known of the Asian horror remakes was The Ring, an unlikely story of a cursed videotape that caused the viewer to die within a week of watching it.

Hollywood has looked to Asia for inspiration for years.

Akira Kurosawa's films provided fodder for two redone classics. The epic Seven Samurai became the gunfighter flick The Magnificent Seven and the director's Yojimbo provided the backbone for A Fistful of Dollars, starring Clint Eastwood.

Once again Old West gunfighters subbed for samurai but the premise of one man playing rivals off one another remains. Since the movie was an unofficial remake Kurosawa sued, won and later bragged he made more money off of Fistful of Dollars than Yojimbo.

At the turn of the millennium Japanese movies like Ringu, Ju-on and Geoul Sokeuro helped reinvent Hollywood horror.

The best known of the Asian horror remakes was The Ring, an unlikely story of a cursed videotape that caused the viewer to die within a week of watching it. Roger Ebert called the movie boring and "borderline ridiculous" but it was a huge hit and paved the way for others like The Grudge and Dark Water.

Hollywood has often looked to Asia for inspiration, but sometimes it has worked the other way round.

Saidoweizu is a Japanese version of the wine-soaked romantic dramedy Sideways, director Toshikazu Nagae put his own spin on Paranormal Activity 2: Tokyo Night, and A Woman, a Gun and a Noodle Shop transports Blood Simple's action from 1980s Texas to 19th century China.

Disney's legacy animates its future

An everything-old-is-new-again theme emerges when looking at the slate of upcoming Disney films.

A titan in Hollywood and one of the largest media conglomerates in the world, the Mouse House is looking back at their rich history in a very interesting way.

For instance, Get a Horse, the dazzling new short that plays before Frozen in theatres, is the first original Mickey Mouse theatrical cartoon in almost two decades.

But more than simply being a reintroduction to a beloved character, it's also a deft marriage of old and new techniques that features, through some technical wizardry, the first vocal performance from Walt Disney since the 1960s.

In the live action roster there's the Oscar hopeful Saving Mr. Banks, the story of the making of the classic Mary Poppins, and Tomorrowland, an epic sci-fi saga that was allegedly inspired by the contents of a mysterious box found in the Disney archives.

The 90-year-old company has one eye on the past and the other very much on the future.

"We like to think of our legacy as a springboard to the future and not something that anchors us so you can't move your feet," says Walt Disney Animation Studios general manager and executive vice-president Andrew Millstein.

Get a Horse is the first original Mickey Mouse cartoon in almost 20 years. CONTRIBUTED

"There is a great wealth of characters and visual material, but in its day the best of Disney was innovative and moved with audiences. We should do the same."

So what should audiences anticipate from Disney in the next few years? Millstein says audiences should, "expect the unexpected."

"We have to be fiercely original. We have to give audiences things they haven't seen before. We want to surprise audiences. We want our stories to be compelling, the worlds to be great, the technology and the visuals to be stunning. If we do our jobs well, that is what's going to happen."

RICHARD CROUSE/FOR METRO

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Farrah Fawcett. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Do you want to own a part of Farrah Fawcett?

Farrah Fawcett's nephew Gregory Walls inherited much of the late actress' personal items, and now he's apparently looking to get rid of some of them.

Walls listed 67 of Fawcett's items — including her People's Choice Award and her driver's licence — with a Dallas-based auction house, according to Radar Online. Walls insists he's unloading the goods for the sake of her fans, writing in the auction catalogue that he decided to list the items after reading thousands of cards and letters they'd sent her.

"It was at that moment that I felt that I would do my best to give her fans a chance to possess some of the things that were special and dear to Farrah."

A portion of the proceeds will go to the Farrah Fawcett Foundation.

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The Word

Sorry Brad, there will be no private island for you

Angelina Jolie surely plans to do something special for Brad Pitt's 50th birthday next month, but that something special apparently doesn't involve buying him an island.

The NY Daily News had reported that Jolie laid out $20 million for an 11-acre, heart-shaped private island on New York's Lake Mahopac, but the owners of the property, named Petra Island, tell E! News that it's still for sale.

"We are open to show Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt the island, but they have to have lunch at my café first," says Donna Massaro, daughter of the island's owners.

The island would be of particular interest to Pitt since the two houses on it were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, one of his favourite architects.

Taylor Swift.

If I don't see you, you're not really there

Well, this must have been awkward. Taylor Swift had a pair of run-ins with ex-boyfriend Harry Styles at the American Music Awards and reportedly made a conscious effort to avoid making eye contact with him, according to Us Weekly.

Sources say that twice Swift crossed paths with the boys from One Direction and kept her laser gaze forward, refusing to acknowledge their presence.

Styles and his bandmates, by contrast, gave Swift a standing ovation when she won for Best Female Country Artist.

Megan Fox.

Fox not resenting her baby this time around

Megan Fox is totally digging being pregnant the second time around.

"For the most part, I would say it's been a lot easier," she tells E! News recently.

"I think that could have a lot to do with the fact that I already have a baby, so I'm so distracted taking care of him that I don't really have time to sit and lament on the fact that I'm pregnant or indulge my pregnancy."

Fox and husband Brian Austin Green welcomed her son, Noah, 14 months ago.

Twitter

@jtimberlake
Never thought I would hear a song I wrote on country radio. My GrandDad is smiling from a bar in Heaven!

@NiallOfficial
Like a zombie right now! It must be coffee time !

@TheRealRoseanne
Let's bomb billionaires next

Katniss Everdeen for a day

North Carolina. Follow in the footsteps of some of your favourite tributes by visiting the sites from the Hunger Games film

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
life@metronews.ca

Recognize this waterfall? It's where Katniss hid Peeta during the Hunger Games. PHOTOS: VAWN HIMMELSBACH

Metro's intrepid travel writer Vawn Himmelsbach channels her inner Katniss Everdeen during an archery lesson in North Carolina.

Want to shoot an arrow like Katniss or learn the art of sling shot like Rue? Whether you're a fan of the Hunger Games or an avid outdoor enthusiast, adventure awaits in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains.

Hike in the wilderness, learn survival skills, or just eat and drink like a celebrity — and may the odds be ever in your favour.

Hit the trails in Dupont State Recreational Forest (about an hour's drive from Asheville) where you'll discover some of the most iconic scenes from the first film. Pick up a trip planner at the Asheville Visitors Center or use the interactive online map (exploreasheville.com) to organize day trips out of Asheville.

A few points of interest in Dupont: hike to Triple Falls (from the main parking lot) to see where Katniss discovers a wounded Peeta. Or head to the scenic Bridal Veil Falls, where Katniss flees from the firestorm. (Note: The waterfalls were edited out of the film, since the tributes were always on the hunt for water.)

If you're interested in behind-the-scenes scoop, it's well worth going on a Hunger Games Unofficial Fan Tour, where your guide will take you to locations used in the first film — locations that would be near impossible to find on your own. You'll also learn archery, sling shot and special-effects camouflage, and eat lunch featuring foods that your favourite tributes would have eaten. Day tours run from April to October and cost $59 US; visit hungergamesunofficialfantours.com for more info.

You can also visit Henry River Mill Village, the location for District 12. Because of vandalism, this abandoned mill town about an hour east of Asheville is closed to the public, but you can take a Hunger Games Unofficial Fan Tour for $50 US. Or, head to Chimney Rock Park for short hikes and rock climbs (also the filming location of The Last of the Mohicans).

Where to stay:

Spend the night at Hotel Indigo, where Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson and Liam Hemsworth stayed during the shoot. This boutique hotel has a contemporary vibe, with unique local touches such as wall murals in each room of nature scenes taken by a local photographer.

Until March 31, Hotel Indigo is offering a Hunger Games package, which includes two nights accommodation, a $15-per-person gift card for lunch at Early Girl Eatery, chocolate chip cookies in your room (Jennifer and Josh's favourite), as well as local Hunger Games trivia. Prices begin at $290 US; email snewton@hlihotels.com for more info.

What to do:

Head to Lexington Avenue Brewery for brisket mac 'n cheese or mountain trout tacos. Alternatively, go to the Laughing Seed Café, where vegan Woody Harrelson went for vegetarian fare. Then head to The Southern for a vanilla bourbon mint julep on the patio.

To get your heart racing, check out Nantahala Outdoor Center for whitewater rafting and zip line tours. You can also hone your outdoor survival skills by taking a wilderness medicine course (scheduled classes or private instruction). Visit noc.com for more info.

Real or not real?

Hunger Games Unofficial Fan Tours will be offering guided tours behind the making of Catching Fire in Atlanta, Ga. You'll visit film locations via private shuttle, learn archery, play archery tag and make your own volcanic rock. Tours start Dec. 14, running through 2014 ($94 US). For die-hard fans take a full weekend, which includes themed accommodations and food, survival training, banquet and game simulation (beginning April 2014 for $599 US).

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Take the chill out of November cold with Black Bean & Avocado Soup

ROSE REISMAN
For more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

This creamy, rich-tasting soup is very nutritious. I like to serve it garnished with reduced-fat sour cream, diced plum tomatoes or a sprinkle of shredded cheddar cheese.

1. Spray a nonstick saucepan with cooking oil, add vegetable oil and place over medium heat. Cook the onion, carrot and garlic, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes or until softened.

2. Set aside 1/2 cup of the black beans. Add the remaining beans, stock, sugar and cumin to the vegetable mixture. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium low. Cover and cook for 15 minutes or until the carrots are tender.

3. Purée soup in blender or food processor, working in batches. Return to saucepan. Stir in reserved beans.

4. Ladle the soup into individual bowls and garnish with cilantro and avocado and sour cream. **THE BEST OF ROSE REISMAN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY: ROSE REISMAN**

Ingredients

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 2 tsp minced fresh garlic
- one 19 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
- 1/2 tsp granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp cumin
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro or parsley
- 1/4 cup diced avocado and reduced-fat sour cream

This recipe serves four. MIKE MCCOLL, FROM THE BEST OF ROSE REISMAN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

Drink of the Week

Juicy Dreams

Bourbon has all the qualities for a cold weather base: warming, festive, affordable and compatible. And because of those qualities, you don't need to do much to it to create a terrific cocktail.

- Ice
- 2 oz bourbon
- 1 oz Lillet
- 1/2 oz lemon juice
- 2 oz pomegranate juice

In an ice-filled cocktail shaker, combine the bourbon, Lillet, lemon juice and pomegranate juice. Shake, then strain into an ice-filled tumbler. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Comfort food Scottish style

Mince and Tatties, Scottish for ground beef and potatoes, holds a special place in chef Lynn Crawford's heart.

Her parents moved to Canada from Scotland and brought with them this simple but amazingly delicious dish, which she says continues to be one of her favourites.

She shares the recipe in her new book, At Home With Lynn Crawford.

Whipped Potatoes

1. Place potatoes in a pot of cold salted water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until fork-tender, about 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in large saucepan over medium heat, heat cream, milk and butter until butter has melted. Keep warm.

3. Drain potatoes well, then force through a ricer into warm cream mixture. Stir to combine, then season with salt and pepper.

Mince and Tatties

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add beef and cook, stirring frequently and breaking meat down with back of a wooden spoon, until no pink remains, about 5 minutes.

This recipe serves four. KATHLEEN FINLAY

2. Add butter and onions and cook, stirring frequently, until browned, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle flour over mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until well incorporated, about 2 minutes more.

3. Gradually stir in stock and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until gravy has thickened slightly, about 20 minutes.

4. Add carrots and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in peas and cook until heated through, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve spooned over hot whipped potatoes.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/ AT HOME WITH LYNN CRAWFORD BY LYNN CRAWFORD. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF PENGUIN CANADA BOOKS INC.

Ingredients

Whipped Potatoes
- 1 kg (2 lb) russet potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) heavy (35 per cent) cream
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) milk
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) unsalted butter
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Mince and Tatties
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) vegetable oil
- 500 g (1 lb) lean ground beef
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) unsalted butter
- 250 ml (1 cup) finely chopped onions
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) all-purpose flour
- 750 ml (3 cups) beef stock
- 10 ml (2 tsp) Worcestershire sauce
- 250 ml (1 cup) diced carrots
- 250 ml (1 cup) frozen peas
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 l (4 cups) hot Whipped Potatoes

Lunch. Grilled Cheese and Asparagus Rolls

The sharp cold-pack cheddar required for this recipe can be found alongside other packaged cheeses in the dairy section of the supermarket.

1. Preheat contact grill. (If your contact grill has more than one temperature setting, set it to high.)

2. Slice rolls in half and place, cut side down, on grill. With lid open, grill for 1 minute.

3. Evenly divide cheese, asparagus and red pepper among rolls to make 4 sandwiches. Sprinkle with pepper, if using.

4. Spread 2 ml (1/2 tsp) of butter on the outside of each roll. Be sure to butter both sides.

5. Place sandwiches on grill and close tightly. Grill for 2 to 3 minutes or until golden brown and crisp. **THE CANADIAN PRESS/ 125 BEST INDOOR GRILL RECIPES BY ILANA SIMON (ROBERT ROSE INC., ROBERTROSE.CA, 2013).**

Ingredients

- 4 kaiser rolls
- 250 ml (1 cup) grated sharp cold-pack cheddar cheese
- 8 spears asparagus, trimmed and steamed
- 1/4 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- Freshly ground black pepper (optional)
- 10 ml (2 tsp) butter, room temperature, divided

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It's alright 'cause I'm saved by the benefits of having a diverse degree

Change of the chalkboard. How to stretch your teaching degree far beyond the desks and dictation

DANIEL MOORE
TalentEgg.ca

If handling a hoard of pupils isn't quite the job you'd imagined, there are plenty of other paths to pursue. ISTOCK

Even if you find a career path you love, it's always a good idea to be aware of industries and roles that match your skills and experience. This is particularly true of teaching, which some individuals explore and discover isn't for them — while others have trouble landing a teaching job in the first place.

How do you find a career outside the classroom when all of your education and work experience have taken place inside those four cozy walls? Also, how do you repurpose an education degree on paper to convince an employer that you're qualified to pursue a different calling?

Most of all, can you find a job that will rival the joy and passion you have for educating and inspiring young minds?

Yes. Here's how.

Discover your core values

Leaving a field for which you've spent years training is unnerving. It can lead to questioning long-cherished goals in both your personal and professional life.

This may sound a little horrible, and ridden with a whole new set of crises, but it's actually the best way forward.

Michelle Dunn, a career coach and former teacher, says that any major career shift needs to be preceded by a genuine reflection about one's core strengths and values. "The next thing that happens to pop up may not be the best thing," she cautions.

"When career coaching, we start with who the person is, what's important to them and their strengths. Getting really clear about those things will help you leverage your skills to turn to something else."

Identify your transferrable skills

Identifying those skills can be difficult coming from a field defined so much by what seems like just one duty: teach stuff. But teachers employ a mass of skills getting a class of 14-year-olds ready to sit down and write an essay on Romeo and Juliet, urbanization or the electoral process.

Teachers research, transfer knowledge, manage diverse groups of individuals, learn new software, evaluate performance, participate in professional development activities, facilitate, work independently and exercise authority.

They also engage in public speaking, presenting complex topics to rowdy audiences!

When writing a cover letter or resumé, the trick, as always, is to disassociate the tasks from the setting. The setting will change, but the tasks essentially remain the same. As Michelle points out: "If you can maintain discipline and leadership in a classroom of 30 kids, you can definitely do that in an organization."

Consider the "helping professions"

Of course, the easiest transition occurs when your skills transfer so naturally it doesn't seem like a daunting change at all.

For teachers, a natural transition is into what Michelle calls "helping professions": training, coaching or advising roles, either within the education sector, but outside the classroom, or in a department with a strong people-focused mandate, like human resources.

Michelle has led plenty of workshops for teachers moving into these fields. She says it's a natural transition since "they want to help people and see them reach their potential," and that's what they're already adept at.

In her own case, Michelle moved into career coaching after teaching abroad for four years and raising two children. It offered a way to build naturally on her interests in counseling and psychology — part of her B.A. work — and "still do what I loved and knew how to do."

Embrace entrepreneurism

Finally, there's a strong case to be made for the unknown — following that other passion and seeing where it leads. This may involve obtaining new credentials along the way, but it can also be done by drawing on the extraordinary work ethic and nerve honed in the classroom.

Contrary to the popular belief that says teachers can't cut it in the cruel world of business, Michelle argues that teachers are native entrepreneurs. They have intuition, drive, excellent people skills and loads of self-direction. These are the skills needed to start something new and develop it into a sustainable livelihood.

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"If you can maintain discipline and leadership in a classroom of 30 kids, you can definitely do that in an organization."

Michelle Dunn
Career coach and former teacher

A successful switch

Fifteen years ago, Cam McRae left an established teaching career in Vancouver to start an e-magazine for mountain biking in the North Shore area.

- It was a bold move for someone who didn't know much about creating websites or managing a business. But he had just returned from a year of teaching (and riding) in Italy, which gave him a new perspective on what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.
- His website, NSMB.com, now boasts a sizeable following and several heavyweight sponsors in the outdoor industry. He still holds on to his teaching credentials, just in case, but he doesn't regret his career move.
- His advice for current teachers considering a similar 180?: "It depends on your employment and family responsibilities. But generally my advice is to go for it; we regret more what we don't do than what we do. Also, the flexibility of teaching – summers, holidays — can allow you to start developing your new interest on the side at first. So take advantage of that."

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Baseball Hall of Fame

Maddux, Thomas headline new hopeful inductees

Four-time Cy Young Award winner Greg Maddux, two-time winner Tom Glavine and two-time AL MVP Frank Thomas are among 19 newcomers on this year's Hall of Fame ballot, joining steroid-tainted holdovers Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa.

Greg Maddux GETTY IMAGES FILE

Ballots are due by Dec. 31, and results will be announced Jan. 8. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Stars finally give fans a win in Dallas

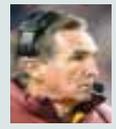
Cody Eakin, Stephane Robidas and Ryan Garbutt scored in a 53-second span of the third period, and the Dallas Stars beat the Anaheim Ducks 6-3 on Tuesday night for their first home win in more than month. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Rodgers unlikely to play vs. Lions

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers returned to practice on a limited basis Tuesday from a fractured left collarbone. He appears highly unlikely to play against the Detroit Lions on Thursday, however. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL



"I think the players are smart enough to understand that if you are 3-8, everybody is playing for their jobs."

Redskins head coach Mike Shanahan after Monday night's 27-6 loss to the 49ers.

Riders' title defence could be missing key playmakers

Free agents. Grey Cup MVP Sheets and Dressler will test waters south of the border

Just days after winning the Grey Cup, the Saskatchewan Roughriders have cleaned out their lockers knowing some players from their successful core may not be back.

Star running back Kory Sheets and slotback Weston Dressler — one of quarterback Darian Durant's favourite targets — will both become free agents in the off-season.

Other players could be lost when Ottawa starts stockpiling its roster with picks from the CFL expansion draft. The existing eight teams will be forced to protect a certain number of players, with the RedBlacks then allowed to pick from those left unprotected.

Durant would like to see some key players stay in Saskatchewan, such as Dressler, his neighbour in the locker-room.

"I want the whole nucleus to be together. We've been together since '08," Durant said Tuesday.

"We put in the time, put in the years so I definitely want him back, but I know he'll probably explore some opportunities that may be out there for him down south and if it doesn't work out then I think he'll be back. This is the place for him. That chemistry we have, you know you saw it throughout the playoffs, and hopefully we'll get something done."

Dressler, who went to the University of North Dakota, joined the Riders in 2008. He has spent his entire career in Saskatchewan. He had a league-high 13 receiving touchdowns in 2012.

The receiver says he's just enjoying the experience of winning the Grey Cup right now, but he also says he would take a look at heading south for the NFL.

"If the right opportunity presented itself, I would definitely take a look at it and have to consider all my options at that point, if I had a real chance," said Dressler.

Sheets originally signed with the San Francisco 49ers in 2009, then moved to the Miami Dolphins later that season and signed with the Carolina Panthers in 2011. He joined the Roughriders in February 2012.

Like Dressler, Sheets also says he's just going to enjoy being a Grey Cup champion. But he can't deny that he has his eyes on the NFL.

"I would like to come back, but if the situation is right in the NFL, I can't stop my heart from going to try and fill that void I have right now," said Sheets. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Going out on top?

Saskatchewan could also be without veteran linebacker Mike McCollough next season.

- McCollough was drafted by the Riders in 2003 and has spent his entire career with the green and white.
- McCollough said he and his wife would sit down in the coming weeks and "decide what's next for us."

Quoted

"I wouldn't play for no other CFL team in the league, so don't anybody got to worry about that." Kory Sheets

Kory Sheets signs autographs as the Roughriders clean out their lockers at Mosaic Stadium on Tuesday. JENNIFER GRAHAM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Burris still wants to be man of Steeltown

Henry Burris THE CANADIAN PRESS

If Henry Burris has his way, he will be the starting quarterback to lead the Hamilton Tiger-Cats back to the Grey Cup next year.

Burris, 38, becomes a free agent in the off-season after two seasons with the Ticats. He says he wants to stay in Steeltown and play at the new Tim Hortons Field stadium that is planned to open next season.

"I want to be back here," he said. "We've had a great run. I still feel like I can get it done."

He showed he could still get it done this season, leading the league with 4,925 passing yards. He completed 373 of 567 pass attempts for 24 touchdowns and 19 interceptions.

The 14-year CFL veteran came to the Ticats almost two years ago in a trade with Calgary that included sending quarterback Kevin Glenn to the Stampeders. At the time, Burris had lost his starting job to Drew Tate after seven straight seasons in Calgary and was looking for a fresh start.

Last year, his first at the Ticat helm, the team finished 6-12 and failed to make the playoffs. This time around, they made it all the way to the Grey Cup before losing the championship 45-23 to the hometown Saskatchewan Roughriders. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tech-ing time to settle, latest in-car gadgetry not as smart as you think

Problems. Complaints coming from all major demograhics unhappy with infotainment and connectivity within their vehicles

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

The 2015 Audi A3 Sedan is a WiFi hot spot and will be the first to offer 4GT LTE service inside a vehicle. PHOTO: AUDI

Vehicles are turning into smart phones and that's having a profound effect on vehicle interiors, and in many cases, the driver's dissatisfaction with such interiors. And the complaints are not just coming from grumpy elders who would rather trowel grout than tweet.

According to consumer research conducted by J.D. Power and Associates, all major demographic bulges (boomers, Gen X, Gen Y), are having issues with the quality and design of some of the connectivity and infotainment systems in today's vehicles. In fact, the younger generations are harder to please because they self identify as tech-savvy, multi-tasking experts and expect instant action and satisfaction with all of their techie devices.

It's a case of, "we like all the technology, but it's not working as brilliantly and easily as advertised." And we really want these things to work, because we're spending more and more time in our vehicles.

Mike VanNieuwkuyk, Executive Director, Global Quality Practice, J.D. Power, recently held fourth on this "in-car experience" topic at the 2013 TalkAUTO conference in Toronto, and noted that, these days, more malfunctions are happening in the navigation and infotainment areas than anywhere else on the vehicle.

In addition to outright malfunctions, his firm also identified a large source of irritants that is more related to bad design than it is to things breaking down. One irritant group was characterized as "soft inadequacies, where needs are addressed but not as preferred" (I only wish I made that up). Another irritant group is tech stuff that is just misaligned with expectations.

A lot of voice command issues fall into these two groups. VanNieuwkuyk said customers complain about the technology profusely, but rank it only second to "touch screen" as the preferred way to control their navigation systems: "Even though many think voice command is terrible, they still want it," said VanNieuwkuyk. "They're waiting for someone to do it right."

After VanNieuwkuyk's report, several automobile dealers assembled on stage to discuss current and various automotive industry trends from their perspective, and it was soon apparent that dealerships are finding themselves on the sharp end of the stick, when it comes to customers' frustrations and learning curves with in-car technologies. Even though they didn't say it outright, you got the sense they felt the automakers weren't doing their share, in educating their customers on how all these complex systems work.

But the dealers had some really good ideas about how to deliver some of the training and information customers need. Because there is just not enough time to demonstrate how everything works when customers take their cars home for the first time, they had to get creative. One dealer conducts a "second delivery" right at the customer's home. Another encourages salespeople to stay in touch with customers 24/7 via smart phones. Another thought that owner manuals should be converted to a series of short videos, which could be uploaded to youtube or available as smart phone apps. Another dealer was contemplating something like the Apple Genius Bar.

I hope these ideas work, and I hope grumpy old men will always feel free to express themselves.

Funny how used market can set new car prices

Key factor. Automakers releasing a new model will refer to amount of secondhand vehicles available before putting price tag on it

JIL MCINTOSH
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There are numerous factors that go into the price of a new car, including how much it costs to build it, how many options it has, and if it's imported, the rate of currency exchange.

But there's also an important consideration that you may not realize: the number of used cars that will be on the market when that new model goes on sale.

"New-vehicle prices have come down in recent years, and are actually below where they were in 2007," says Carlos Gomes, senior economist and auto industry specialist for Scotiabank. "You'll start to see a change next year, and used cars are the key."

Used cars affect the price of new cars—and their price, in turn, is generally determined by how many there are available. The prime age is around four years old, when they're still new enough to appeal to most buyers in the secondary market, and when many of them are coming off leases. When there are fewer of these used vehicles available and demand for them is high, sellers can ask more money for them.

"Prior to the economic downturn of 2008 and 2009, we used to have around 600,000 vehicles that were leased annually," Gomes says. "That virtually collapsed and has been slow to recover, and a result, we're having a very significant shortage of used vehicles."

The raw numbers

- **2013.** Canadians will buy approximately 1.73 million new vehicles in 2013.
- **Imports.** Canada normally imports between 150,000 and 200,000 used vehicles from the U.S. each year, but that number has dropped due to very low new-vehicle sales following the 2008 economic crash.

When used-car prices are high, and therefore closer to the cost of a brand-new car, many buyers are likely to spend a little extra to get the new one.

Manufacturers try to keep the difference as small as possible, either by setting lower prices or by offering incentives, so that buyers will choose the new model.

The automakers continually monitor annual car sales and leases, which gives them some idea of how many vehicles will enter the resale market in the future, and how that number will affect the price of used vehicles overall.

Used car prices will affect the price of brand new vehicles. JIL MCINTOSH

"Vehicle affordability is at one of the best levels ever, so it's a great time to buy a vehicle," Gomes says. "However, keep in mind that improved emissions technologies will start to be phased into vehicle prices as well, so expect that the trend of low prices on new cars is likely not here to stay."

Let the wrap artists pimp your ride

Autoknow. An alternative to paint makes the impossible possible and just peels off when you want to make a change

TODD BURLAGE
wheelbasemedia.com

A heat gun stretches the wrap into tight areas so it will conform to the surface of the vehicle, then the excess is trimmed away. BOTH IMAGES WHEELBASE

Taste notwithstanding, this complicated pattern would cost a fortune to paint on a vehicle. With a wrap it doesn't matter whether it's a solid colour or a weird 'camo-maro' pattern as the material cost is the same per square foot.

From iridescent or glow-in-the-dark colours, to leopard-skin or zebra-stripe designs, vehicle wraps are changing the way folks with an eye for flair and a few bucks to spend are customizing their rides, all in an effort to make a bold statement with their head-turning ideas.

Unique styling options include the friendly clown-fish design from the Disney movie Finding Nemo, while others like the famous flames from the old Matchbox cars take a more macho approach.

Whatever your fancy or design agenda, the changing age of modern vehicle artistry is evolving from the old-school and expensive paint job to the more creative and relatively affordable full-body vinyl wrap.

Whether for advertising or for nothing more than personal preference, Bernie Michaud, president of INCOLOR, Inc., (incolor.ca) explains that vinyl wraps are quickly becoming the design option of choice for business and vehicle owners who crave visibility, with some flexibility.

"Instead of paying for an $8,000 paint job, you can do a wrap for about half of that," said Michaud. "And if you decide after a few years you want a different style, it's easy to remove (the wrap) and change it out." Through advanced computer design and printing, the average car owner can add an intricate pattern, a personalized portrait or a scenic look to their vehicle that would be nearly impossible to paint or outrageously expensive to try. Colours? Chrome, carbon fibre, lime-green, camouflage; feel free to use the imagination. A flat or glossy paint look, a combination of the two? Again, there are no boundaries to these designs.

"It's mind-boggling the things you can do now with all the creative options the vinyl wraps offer," Michaud says. "There are tons of advantages going this route, and it's becoming more popular all the time." Michaud said that the improving technology and durability for these vinyl vehicle wraps hasn't stopped moving in the five years his shop has offered the service.

From more-durable vinyl, to a growing catalog of vehicle templates, to longer-lasting ink, Michaud called the wrap business a "canvas on wheels" and a "rolling billboard."

Vehicle wrapping has become so sophisticated, do-it-yourself websites such as custom-car-wraps.com and superwraps.com offer the creative freedom to design a personalized look through a list of drop down menus with colour and pattern choices.

And while customization is a great touch to individual styling, Michaud says that the greatest advantage to the vehicle wrap over the traditional paint job, believe it or not, is defence against the elements.

"It gives protection from UV-rays, acid rain, light scratches . . . "These give you great paint protection. It protects your investment and helps the vehicle hold its resale value."

And business and vehicle owners are taking notice. We've all seen the pink Mary Kay Cadillacs rolling around town? They're now "pink wrapped" instead of painted so when their cosmetic career reaches the end of the road, the vinyl shell can be easily removed to unveil a more desirable silver or grey paint scheme underneath.

If done professionally, the wrapping process is relatively simple. There are basically two methods: partial; and full body.

A partial wrap will "decorate" only a specific area of the vehicle, such as the hood and/or the doors. This cost-cutting approach is typically used for advertising with company logos, graphics and colours with the vehicle's existing paintjob as the colour background.

Full-body wraps are just that; a bumper-to-bumper design that covers the entire body of the vehicle and gives it an entirely new look.

Wraps are also being used more on back windows with a special kind of perforated vinyl that allows the driver to see out, but shows only the design from the outside looking in.

"This is a fast-growing business and I truly don't see any negatives," Michaud said. "We have only been doing this for about four or five years and the material has already gotten so much better."

Five-year warranties that protect against peeling and bubbling are fairly standard in the wrap business but Michaud said that if properly installed, the lifespan can stretch to about 10 years. The ink on logos and graphics tends to fade some before that, especially in sunny and harsher climates. As a word of warning for those interested in a vehicle wrap, Michaud says to never install one that hasn't been coated with a laminate to help protect the ink from quick fading.

And cost? A good estimate is from $7 to $8.50 per square foot for the digitally designed wrap with lamination, and the professional install costs about $2.50 to $3 per square foot.

All tallied, a full-body wrap for a full-size van will run about $4,000, a pickup truck about $3,500 and a standard passenger car about $3,000. But given the advertising visibility and advantages, Michaud said these wraps pay for themselves many times over.

"You get so much more advertising bang for your dollar," he said.

So whether it's to showcase your hotrod or to promote your retail business, the vinyl wrap is finding a tight fit on its place in vehicle design.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Your critical thinking may not be as sharp as it usually is, so be careful what you allow yourself to believe. There are a lot of strange ideas in the world. You also started a few.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Quick decisions are not always good and the planets warn that you should reserve judgment on important issues unless you are absolutely sure of your stance. Even then, err on the side of caution.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Stop worrying about things over which you have no control. As the Sun moves through your opposite sign, there are a lot of things others say and do that you cannot influence. It's no big deal.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You could find yourself at a loose end today, uncertain of your next move. Who says you have to move at all? Why not let life come to you for a change. You don't have to be a go-getter all the time.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It may be tempting to take a risk today but the planets warn you will most likely regret it. There is only one thing you can be sure of at the moment and that is you cannot really be sure of anything.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you are smart, you will fight the impulse to take a shortcut. If you try to cut corners, you will be asking for trouble and trouble is not the kind of guest to turn down an invitation.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You need realize that some kind of scheme is not in the least bit practical. It may be a blow to your ego but there are other useful things you could be doing with your time.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If you poke your nose into a friend's personal issues you will get no thanks for it at all, no matter how well-intentioned or useful your advice may be. Some people need to learn from their own mistakes.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There are changes taking place in your life and almost all of them are good, so go with the flow and don't be scared to move in a direction you have not been before.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
There are so many interesting things going on in the world around you that you won't be able to focus on one thing for any length of time. That's OK. Variety is needed to get your creative juices flowing.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Nothing in life stays the same for long so if something (or someone) goes out of your life over the next 24 hours, bid it a fond farewell and start looking for something better to replace it.

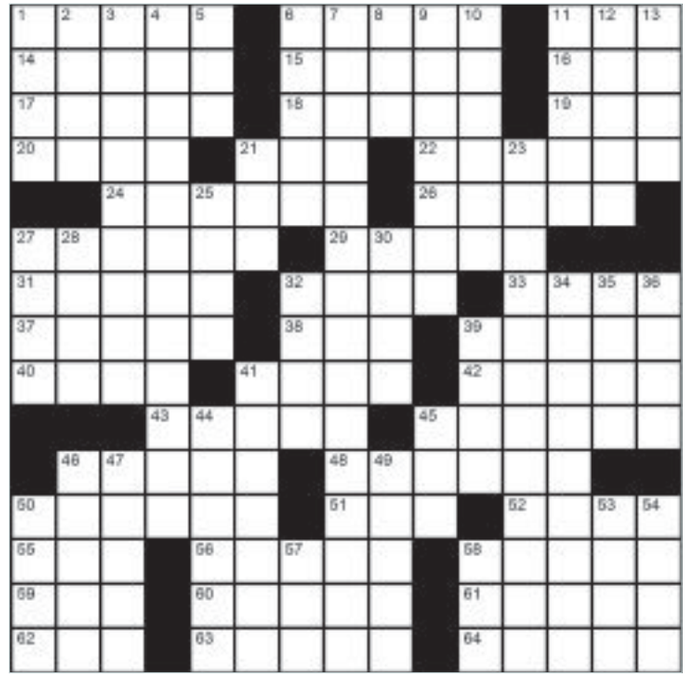
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Work-related matters must be handled with care, especially if you are one of those Pisceans who tends to be a bit reckless in your attitude towards people in positions of power.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



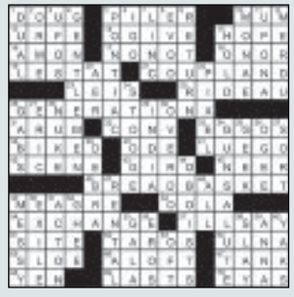
Across

1. Posh title
6. Much, slangy-ly
11. Hat
14. Trees: White poplar
15. Off-Broadway theatrical awards
16. Have payments
17. Bungle
18. Prescription warning, __ __ directed
19. Campaigned
20. Paving stone
21. Perish
22. Newfoundland's official bird, Atlantic __
24. Way out there
26. "Indoors __ __?" (Summer eater's query)
27. Drenched: 2 wds.
29. Ballotings
31. Ms. Rimes
32. Siestas
33. Fasten to the bulletin board
37. Do the tango
38. Mel of baseball
39. Capital of India, New __
40. Mr. Hershiser
41. "Je ne __ quoi."
42. Remixer/producer, William __
43. Prefix to 'dontist' (Braces giver)
45. Horrified
46. __-_ _ _ agent (Former employee at The Company)
48. Famous casino in Las Vegas, Golden __
50. Country star Dwight
51. CSI evidence
52. Saran __
55. Keyboard key
56. Country classic: "By the __ _ Get to Phoenix"
58. LED = Light-Emitting __
59. Plum part
60. Put on __ __ (Fake it)
61. __ __ in the air (That's still uncertain)
62. Ski hill machine, __-Cat
63. Big bags
64. Sailing: 2 wds.

Down

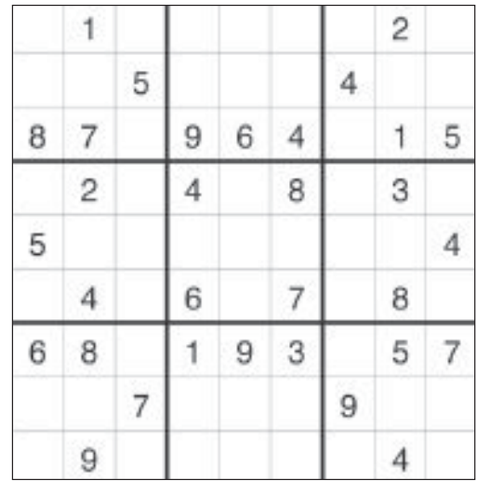
1. Chef Emeril Lagasse's sounds!
2. Classic comic strip, __ the Agent
3. Dermatology: Type of injectable filler
4. Functional landmark in Halifax since 1803: 3 wds.
5. Modern
6. 1963 The Kingsmen hit, when doubled
7. Calgary Tower's dazzling rotating feature: 2 wds.
8. Fasten
9. Some spouts spots
10. Guarantee
11. 1921: Greek island where Prince Philip was born
12. Expect
13. Sean of movies
21. Banned pesticide
23. Canadian hockey play-by-play broadcasting legend, b.1902 - d.1985: 2 wds.
25. Reality star Ms. Leakes
27. Canadian shoe store
28. Shakespeare tragedy, King __
30. Selects
32. Mr. Wyle
34. Seabird
35. Vitalities
36. "Knight Rider" car
39. Actor/rapper, Snoop __
41. Endurance
44. Lariats
45. Title in Turkey
46. Reddish-rose dye
47. _-__ knife
49. Segments
50. Slangy positives
53. _ __ (Together, in music)
54. "Shoop" by Salt-n-__
57. Fleetwood __
58. Wee width

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

8	2	5	1	9	3	7	4	6
4	3	1	5	6	7	2	9	8
6	7	9	8	2	4	5	1	3
7	5	4	2	3	8	9	6	1
2	1	8	9	5	6	3	7	4
9	6	3	4	7	1	8	2	5
1	4	7	3	8	2	6	5	9
5	8	2	6	1	9	4	3	7
3	9	6	7	4	5	1	8	2

Today
-7°/-14°
Variable

Thursday
-10°/-11°
Variable

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